

Diamonds Way

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Summary: Diamond & Members of the Neb' tell about Diamond's unplugging.

1. The Dream World

Disclaimer: the characters are not mine, nor do I make money with this, all characters owned by Warner Bros. etc. Authors note: english is not my native tongue, so I would be thankful for receiving any suggestions on obsolete terms/words. Mail me: andrea_wahl@my-deja.com
Diamonds way

Italic text indicates thoughts

The very last Night

Sundown over the sprawl.

I ended my meditation with a long, deep exhale. Time to go. I wish I could have convinced Tanaka not to go to this meeting.

'Hell, what a shit!' cursing on I chose my clothes: my kevlar bullet-vest, a white shirt, holster, black jacket, black pants & shoes (not too high heeled, still suitable for a run). Combined with my short-cut hair it was the perfect androgyny look.

I wasted no time on make-up, instead I checked my Glock once more and holstered it then. Two more extra clips I wouldn't need , a knife at my lower left leg; everything perfectly hidden under the excellent cut of my clothes.

With a last glimpse at the mirror I left & took the elevator down.

Jacko was already there, right in time as always.

'Diamond, baby! You're looking great as always. What a pity I'm married',

always the same procedure with ol' Jacko. I liked working with him: he was a cautious man scarcely ever making mistakes. Unfortunately he lacked the 'instinct' for danger ahead, so most of his jobs were wetwork and all things where muscles were required. When we worked as bodyguards for Tanaka he checked and drove the car (he was the best driver I ever met) and worked as my backup.

'OK, buddy, let's go. And keep your eyes open, got a very bad feeling tonight.'

War was on between our Crane-Feather-Yakuza who controlled south-city and the Italian Marconi-family that now tried to run us out on drugs and gambling. Many deads on both sides, the cops just leaning back, celebrating every dead gangster they found. They knew that whoever the winner of that fight would be, every dead man would be less guns against the cops.

We drove to Tanaka's house where he and another guard were waiting. Yoshi sat in front, beside Jacko, Tanaka and me in the rear.

Again I tried to talk the plan over, letting me check the restaurant instead of Yoshi, because it was such a risky undertaking. But he refused. In fact, just because it was so risky he wanted to keep me by his side.

'Would you spar me tomorrow at 5 pm?', he asked

'It is an honor, Sir. I will be there.' great!

That meant to spend a good time on Kendo in Tanaka's private dojo. With enough luck I could get another lesson from his great Sensei - a never drying source of wisdom and technique.

We reached the 'Chambeauliard' a very delicious French restaurant. Yoshi went in and came back 5 minutes later, signaling everything OK. We entered, Yoshi in lead, then Tanaka and me, Jacko forming the back barrier.

Senator Parker was already there. I double-checked for any known faces and suspicious behaving guys in there: nothing.

I scarcely listened to their negotiations: Tanaka buying another high ranking politician was nothing new. And it was absolutely not embarrassing for Parker to be seen with Tanaka, because officially he was just a wealthy industrial tycoon.

I knew better.

I joined the Yakuza 7 years ago, when I was 12. For 2 years now I was most-time his bodyguard, doing only rarely wetwork - only when things needed to be done extremely carefully. I knew his partners, his taste, I knew most of the officials on his payroll. As far as he would ever trust someone, he did so in me.

I can't remember why I turned around, but I saw a man getting up just that moment, drawing a gun.

'DOWN!' I yelled, pushing Tanaka off his seat, directing him under the bench, 'stay here under any circumstances!'

The Glock was pulled instantly. The whole room was filled with shooting. I hit 2 guys and ran over towards the bar. Bullets were hissing all around and just before I took cover behind the bar, it struck me.

Rays of pain went through my body and breathing was hard. Hell, that broke my ribs!

And what a slaughter that was. I did not waste a shot, but soon the extra-clips were gone, too and I realized that there was no way to do anything for Tanaka, he lied in a puddle of blood, eyes broken.

Time to leave unless I didn't want to exit dead or arrested. I fought my way to the back door where I watched Yoshi shooting Jacko.

This damned fucker! He had sold us!

I grabbed my knife, came up behind him and cut his throat. Blood all over the place, wetting me when I used his cramping body as a shield to the back door, firing with his gun.

I took the next fire-stairs upward and when I reached the roof I rested, listened: cops were coming, sirens howling all over the place, shooting had ceased. I just relaxed a bit when I heard the flapping of a helicopter approaching. I managed to enter the stairways, ran down into the cellar. I found what I was looking for: a sewer entry.

Down there I could wait until the first excitement would settle a bit. I waited there for 3 hours. Time enough to think:

I recently found the lines tapped in 3 of the dwellings I used. Thought it were done by the FBI because the work was done really good and the first one I found only by accident. Somebody tried to track me down. Now I knew it was the Marconi-clan.

I couldn't go there. It was sure they wanted me alive to press all info out of my brains before they finally would kill me.

The last place left was in the suburbs: Den no. 4. How to get there? My clothes were at least dirty, maybe even bloody (you can't tell that in the dark). No taxi would take me in. I had to change. In my mind I checked this quarter. A dry-cleaner! Yeah, I would find something fitting there.

I came out after 2am, making my way in the shadows as far as possible, found the back-entry of the cleaner and fumbled at the lock. Shit, I wasn't too good at that and it took me a long time. I went in and slowly walked around in the dark. I found several halfway fitting parts, all dark-colored, dropped my dirty ones and went back on the street.

I walked away from this area for another hour, so a taxi would not be able to tell he picked up somebody near the killing at the restaurant. I was feeling tired, now that the adrenaline was low again.

Finally I found a taxi that brought me close to the town-house where

I had my last hide-out.

I gritted my teeth at the thought of these nice people, living here with their eyes thoroughly shut from the reality out there: from the killing and corruption right in front of their doors.

I left the taxi 3 blocks away from my target, still worrying about being pursued.

Dawn was breaking when I came there. All I longed for was a smoke and some speed to keep me up.

When I reached my door, my instinct told me something was wrong here. Heck! I was so tired, my gun was empty, and there was possibly another ass waiting in there. They must have watched my very close because I kept this place as secret as possible, nobody knew about it - I had thought.

I retreated and went down to the cellar, dug out an extra clip I had hidden under one of the dryers down there, reloading my weapon, then returned.

I carefully opened the door, secured the hall, went on...

A Backup found

Trinity remembers:

So many losses.

Even now, weeks after they all were killed it was hard to cope with. At least Neo and me found comfort within each other.

Being with him for the longest time of all crew-members, we had seen lots of deads but I knew you never get used to that. You always look for the mistakes you made causing the death of someone under your command.

It must have been Tank who suffered the hardest, I guessed. Being a FreeBorn he had lost his real brother and that is something the rest of us, all Matrix-born, will never know. We could only guess what he felt, never being sure if we were right. There are many things he will never be able to share with us. Makes him the very loner on this ship.

We had just managed to fix the Neb' with the help of another ship. In addition they gave us another boy to enhance our poorly reduced crew:

Needles. A skinny, small 15-year old teen unplugged for 6 months now. He was said to have healing hands, and with some training sessions he would be a great medic. Good to have a Medic, but what we really needed were guns! Without Swich and Apoc trips into the Matrix had become more dangerous. Not to forget Mouse and the Betrayer (we still do not mention his name) who did good work, too.

But Needles hated guns, he refused killing. It was hard work to convince him that we needed him 'in there' unless the crew was rebuilt. Tank forced him to swallow every bit of data about guns and fighting, giving him extra-lessons because his refusing mind hindered

Needles from becoming a reliable shooter.

In return Tank spent nights hacking, searching for more medical data, to find Needles another goodie.

Tank never liked what he did then, but he saw the need of having another reliable guy on the trips in. Not wanting to loose more friends, he accepted the fact that sometimes it is not possible to be a friend to everyone, always trying to be as friendly & nice as possible.

But Needles hated Tank. Seeing him as the dungeon-keeper of his tortures, they had many heavy quarrels. Until one day, Needles put up a fight.

We heard them arguing in the mess room when suddenly the sounds indicated that the story had become more physical. We all felt exhausted from the double-shifts we took, and the constant quarrels were unnerving. I sighed, Neo shook his head.

â€šI will put this to an end now, no matter what it will be like!' Morpheus said and went in.

â€šSTOP THIS!'

his voice so commanding I rarely heard from him. Normally his authority did not need such an enforcement.

Tank came out and went to his room, the mess door closed behind him.

â€šDo you think, he hurt him?' I asked Neo.

â€šC'mon, Trin! Be logical: how could this kid ever hurt this bear of a man? I couldn't do that.'

â€šI know, Neo. But you know as well that Tank is like a brother to me - as far as I can imagine how that would feel like.'

â€šSo go there, Trin!'

Neo shoved me away, grinning. He understands me ever so right.

I returned quickly with the info that Morpheus had sent him there to wait for Morpheus having a word with Tank.

Morpheus and Needles spent more than half an hour in there. When they came out, Needles had the look of someone accepting facts he cannot change.

This ended the symptoms, but Needles would never like Tank, that was sure. Hard to believe that anybody could not like him.

Weeks later, we found what we were so desperately looking for:

Guns!

Being on a night shift I found somebody carefully asking the right questions in the right places.

Taking closer looks on her proofed to be difficult because she already led an illegal life in there, being a japaneses Yakuza-bosses bodyguard, sometimes doing wetwork for them.

Being the criminal she was, she always was careful at leaving no traces of her presence. She too was always on the search for detectives being on her tracks, she repeatedly checked the various appartments she used for bugs and tapped lines.

Man! She was shooting like hell, scarcely missing ever. And watching her doing Tae-Kwon-Do and Ken-Do was a pleasure.

When she started hacking for her boss, she quickly found things, her suspicious mind would not accept. She spent more and more time in the Net, searching.

We discussed the question of contacting her several times, because Morpheus and me thought she could be a problem: she had a furious character and we had doubts that a killer would really fit the group, no matter how urgent our need for good guards would be.

â€œIf she will pop, that might be extremely dangerous for us. I mean, she could cause serious damage to the ship and us.' I said.

Neo: â€œShe is a risk, yes. But she could be very a valuable enhancement.'

Tank: â€œAs long as she is cool she will be worth 2 ordinary guys. Records proof that she manages nowadays not to loose her temper.'

Needles: â€œHeavens! She is a killer! She is a darn cold-blooded exterminator. I doubt she knows any moral instances. Can't imagine it will make a difference to her killing us or a cop.'

Tank: â€œMaybe it's just a perfect adaptation to her living. Who knows?'

Neo: â€œYeah. If she was that reckless, she wouldn't go ahead asking all these questions. We all know that the truth can change people very much.'

Me: â€œAnd you can never tell the direction before it happens.'

Neo: â€œIf we don't get more hands soon, we will be not operating for a long time. Recruits are rare these days. We should be glad for every chance!'

We fell quiet, staring at Morpheus who was sitting there, thinking. Once again a risky desicion had to be made by him. He knew that all of us were waiting for his command, blindly trusting he would do the right thing. A heavy burden.

He straightened:

â€œlet's make contact. Neo will come with me in, the rest of you stays here. As soon as we know her answer, you Tank, will hook Trinity and Needles up.', turnig to needles with a smile he said: â€œas I promised this will be your first trip as a medic. Anyway you

keep a weapon just to be prepared. Got that?'

â€œRighty-right, Sir!' Needles grinned from one ear to the other.

After some directions given to Tank, where to load them up exactly, Needles and me plugged the two men in. This was a hard good-bye for me and Neo. We both knew why Morpheus split up the team: he did not want to sacrifice all 4 in this risky, hurried task. There was no time for long words. Just another deep look and then his eyes closed and his mind was washed into the Matrix.

While Needles and me were just watching, Tank was in the (questionable) lucky position to do something. Although I knew that his helplessness when watching his comrades suffering in the Matrix was hard on him, I now wished to be in his place.

We watched the two of them walking the Matrix, and finally entering Diamonds apartment. They made themselves comfortable in the living-room. This was a bit unusual a process but time was against us since we got knowledge of a third party tracking her down for some reason.

We all waited for her to come.

'There she is.' Tank announced.

I stepped up close behind him.

'Shit!' Tank made contact with Morpheus: ' She knows something's wrong. She's at the front door, readying her gun. be darn cool! ... Now she leaves again.'

â€œWatch her. Tell me when she leaves the building!' Morpheus told him.

â€œShe's coming back now, she reloaded her gun. She is very nervous, so be careful!' Tank cut the line.

I bend forward across Tank's shoulder to get an even closer look at the scene. There was no way to interfere soon enough, so all we could do was crossing fingers and holding breaths.

'Trin, you hurt me.' Tank said.

'Sorry.' I now realized my fingers clenched deeply into his shoulder. I removed my hand and got hold of the chair instead.

We kept watching.

She secured the area and found them in the living room...

Diamond tells

I finally located them in my living room. Two guys, a bald dark man and another skinny white guy. they looked exactly like the good-cop-bad-cop couple I had met too often. OK, so far: no Marconi-guys, I could nearly smell that.

'Freeze!'

I fixed them with my Glock

'You guys now better tell me what the hell you want here! And be sure I'm gonna blow your brains off if I don't like what I hear.'

Mr. Black, being the elder didn't even twink - instead he gave me a smile!

'We are not here, to arrest you, Diamond', he said

'So you entered the wrong apartment. My name is Jeniffer Larson, as you could have read outside. Bye.'

A small gesture with my head towards the exit .

'I'm sorry, but before we leave, either with or without you, we have to do some serious talking. You recently had joined some hard-to-find chat-rooms-'

'Shit-rooms??' giving him the you-are-talking-chinese look.

' - where you made contact with a person named Trinity.' he didn't even pause... 'You were asking questions that caught our attention and we were watching you for a while.'

'YOU! You tapped the lines!'

'Yes and some more things you can't understand by now. Today we decided to now make contact. I'm sorry but we have to make a desicion right now because we have information that the Marconis will soon show up here to get hold of you.'

'So ka. Your'e no cops, even no FBI-Agents. Who the heck are you? And what do you want?'

with every word he said I became more and more puzzled. Mr. White was still doing nothing, saying nothing but his eyes were very awake, his body tense. He was feeling just as uncomfortable as me.

'What we offer is a deal:' Mr. Black continued,

'We need your services and in return we will answer you all your chatroom-questions, show you the truth. -- Unfortunately, once you agreed to come with us there will be no turning back ever. Do you understand, what I am talking about?'

He took off his glasses, looking at me with inquiring eyes. This was something very serious, I realized. And all of a sudden I knew who this man was!

'You are Morpheus?' 'If saying is true, you risked a lot to come here. And you know the very truth about that thing nobody dares to mention aloud: the Matrix?'

He nodded.

'Then you are Trinity?' I adressed Mr. White.

'No. I'm sorry. Once I too thought her being a guy - but believe me

she's very female. I'm Neo.'

'And you hot shots tell me you are in need of ME ?'

'Well' Morpheus went on, 'Nobody's perfect. Anyway we now have to come to a decision: you stay here in all your comfort and ignorance or you will join us, learn the truth. As a symbolic step, swallow one of these pills. Trust me, please.'

_ I fumbled my diamond-earrings; one for every kill I ever made (because I hated these tattooed tears in the face). It was then that I secured the gun and put it away, taking the red pill. While I swallowed, Morpheus took a cell phone off his pocket, simply saying

_

_ 'send them in and start the trace!' _

_ 'They will be here in 10 minutes. So please, Diamond, take a seat and try to relax.' Morpheus invited me . _

_ We were waiting... _

_ _

_ Tank remembers: _

_ While Morpheus and Neo were talking in there, Needles gave me a quick professional advice of what had to be done once the body was aboard: clean off the jelly and keep her warm. _

_ 'Just clean her and keep her warm! Warmth is essential! The thermic shock is too heavy, from the 37 celsius pod to the 15 celsius here onboard. Wrap her up with as many blankets as possible.' he explained, 'The rest can wait until I return.' _

_ He then gave me a list of needed equipment to upload with him. _

_ As long as we stick to 'professional business', we get along. Otherwise we don't talk too much. _

_ Trinity gave me a concerned look: _

_ 'You'll get that managed all alone?' _

_ I nodded, although I felt uncomfortable at the thought of leaving the whole crew in there unsupervised for several minutes. _

_ Finally Morpheus asked for Trin & Needles to be sent in. _

_ 'OK then', she said, 'so jock me in first and then Needles.' _

_ So I did. _

_ It all went smooth and easy. _

_ I picked her out of the sewers, dragging the limp body to our tiny shower-cabin. Hell, it was a drag! to scrub down a dead-like body in a haste, because I wanted to get back to my consoles ASAP. It was good, she was unconcho because in my haste I wasn't too careful and I sure caused some bruises. _

_ I then shouldered her, put her on the surgery-table, wrapping the body up in several blankets, securing the body with 2 strips to keep her from falling down. _

_ Hell, I was soaking wet! I saw the track of puddles leading from the hygienic-cell to the infirmary . I took off my clothes while I rushed over to my terminals. there I quickly checked the monitors and went for a blanket. _

_ They had reached the exit and one after the other I downloaded them, took them off the hook. _

_ Needles dashed over to Diamond to start the recreation-program.

_

_ 'Tank, your wet! Did you dunk yourself in the sewer?' Neo smirked.

_

_ 'Yo man!' I answered, 'and without any problem I can give you the opportunity to share that pleasure!' _

_ We went into a clinch, me 'struggling' to drag Neo to the hiches gate. _

_ Morpheus observed the chaos I had left all over the place. he waited until we had ended our wrestling, telling me: _

_ 'Tank, clear the deck please. Start at the infirmary, so Needles won't be bothered by your stuff lying around. This place looks like you were pretty busy. You did a good job.' _

_ Wow! he was more than content otherwise he wouldn't have mentioned it. _

_ 'Aye, Sir!' _

_ with a grin I dashed to my quarters, finding me some dry clothes and went mopping up... _

_ _

_ _

2. The Real World

++++ Diamond awake +++++

I finally woke up in the dark. I was shivering in the cold and couldn't see anything *am I blinded? or dead? * It was so dark that I could nearly taste and touch this embarrassing complete absence of light. All of a sudden I felt panic coming up - a completely new experience for me, holding my breath, choking me....

When I rushed off the pallet I was lying on, I felt something getting hold of my left forearm, I managed to get free with a sharp pain. *must get out! * I completely lost orientation, not knowing up and down, knocking my head against a hard surface - I feel very close to completely freaking out when all of a sudden the walls open up

Freezing, grasping for air, I can see a humans' silhouette standing in an opening *why didn't I realize that door before? *

â€šCalm yourself', a dark voice says, â€ševerything is alright. You just woke up sooner than we expected. I'm sorry there was no light on.'

*How did he know why I panicked? *

â€šDo you think you can get some more sleep?'

I nodded.

â€šDo you mind being left alone?'

â€šY...' I cleared my throat, â€šYeah, I guess I will be OK.'

I staggered over to my bed, sitting down while he is watching me. With a faint nod of his head he turned away, moving the door to close it again.

â€šCan you please leave that door open?' *Buddha! I am whining like a little girl. Heck! What's up with me? *

â€šsure.'

Off he went. His steps faded out and I could now hear other things: low voices echoing and the sounds you can hear when everything is quiet and somebody else alive & awake is around: shuffling feet, sighs, clearing of nose and throat. To hear I was not completely alone somehow comforted me and I relaxed a bit, cuddling up in my blanket. There was something else: a low noise as if a big machine was running, accompanied by slight vibrations. Where was I?

But it was too cold. I always was feeling cold quickly, friends called me a â€šmobile freezing' and here it was cold like winter. Although I tried, I couldn't find a way to feel comfortable enough to fall asleep again.

Footsteps approaching: They sounded lighter, quicker than the ones before. Another person peeks inside my now open cabin. A woman.

â€šYou can't sleep?'

â€šNo. It's too cold.'

â€šWait, I think I can help you.'

She disappeared. another door opened nearby and soon she was back with another blanket.

â€šHope this helps you a bit. Good night.'

â€šThank you.'

She disappeared again and the door she opened before was now being closed. *Cool! 2 blankes should be enough. *

Minutes pass...

The woman must have entered the room next door and it was obvious that she was not alone. I could hear the sounds of two people making love.

In my actual state of mind that was nothing I could cope with. Although you learn not to listen when you spend years with Japanese people, momentarily I was just too..... *what? *confused to focus on my own business. *what business? *

I raised myself, wrapped me up in one of the blankets, exited my cabin and curiously looked around to find that other source of human sounds I heard before...

My bare feet made a splish-splash-sound on the steel floor and the warmth of my feet was quickly absorbed by the cold metal. Most structures were lost in darkness, but anyway this was kind of a strange place. *this is a nightmare and when I wake, I will have a hot bath! * I climbed up a ladder and approached a man sitting in a chair in front of a chaotic conglomeration of keyboards and monitors. Seemed the monitors with the continuous scrolling code were the only source of light around.

“Still can't sleep?”

He turns around, giving me a friendly but concerned look. I took a closer look at Morpheus, trying to find out what was different from his looks since we saw the last (and first) time. Or at least the last time that I seemed to remember clearly in my oh-so confused mind.

All of a sudden I realized I was staring openly at him and I ripped my eyes off his appearance, clearing my throat *why do I feel so embarrassed? That's never been my style! *

“Yeah, well... it uh... grew too noisy, ya know? I just can't stand that tonight. Thought it would be the best to see who else is awake here”

“Lucky them. Sometimes it's not too easy for the loners among us. It is not long ago that we lost half of our crew: dear friends to all of us.” he sighs “some of us are still grieving. - But take a seat somewhere and make yourself as comfortable as possible.”

With a gesture he invited me to sit somewhere on the table and I did so, pushing away some sheets of paper.

Morpheus offered me a “tea” and I gladly accepted something hot to drink. Argh! What was that? Nearly tasteless, it had just enough taste to make clear that this was the worst tea I ever tasted. But it warmed me and that was more than nothing.

We spent more than an hour there, just sitting. I felt that this wasn't the right time for the thousands of questions that were whirling in my head. He would talk when the moment was right. Anyway, I really took some comfort in the calm & steady presence of Morpheus.

More and more details of my surrounding trickled into my consciousness: The IV-plug in my forearm with a dried small trickle of blood where I ripped off the needle in my panicking, the metallic smell all over the place, the strange rags Morpheus and me *!* wore as clothing *were was my jacket? my boots? my smokes?! * and the worn-out look of all the equipment around. *if this is the Matrix I don't know what is so special about it. *

Then I felt sleep overwhelming me and went back into my room and quickly dazed away.

Next morning I was introduced to the crew: Trinity *the blanket-giving woman *, Tank the Operator *whatever that may be * and Needles, the Medic *a 15 year old doc? Ridiculous *. Neo and Morpheus I already knew, memories were coming back slowly.

I watched them eating some amorph stuff. I wasn't hungry at all after I had a closer look on my body L it was in a poor condition, far from the super-fit organism I had trained for years. If they really rebuilt the muscles 8 weeks long while I was in an artificial sleep, what did I look like, when they picked me up???

Why was anything atrophied at all?

Still not a cigarette in sight.

Morpheus addressed me:

'I think, the moment has come to answer some of your questions, especially the one that brought you here. Come with me. Tank, Needles: help me, please.'

The Operator and the Medic immediately dropped their spoons and followed Morpheus. *Wow! good trained crew. Tanaka would be content * My curiousitiy made me keep up with their pace.

We came to the area were I sat with Morpheus last night but they led me to one of the chairs put up in a circle right beside. Inviting gestures made me take place while Tank jumped into his chair. Neo and Trinity joined the group now.

Needles kept my head pressed against the chair:

'this will feel a bit sick, but you'll get used to that soon.'

Woooosh! *and how sick! Holy shit.*

I found myself in an area that formed the perfect contradiction to last night's embarrassing darkness: a vast, white nothing. But now I felt like me again! And I looked like me again, too! Even my favourite clothes were back. *Will this nightmare never end? Will there always be another exaggeration? Wonder what can top this!*

I got the standard-introduction into their construct and the nature of the matrix. And I was so cool: nearly 10 years among the Yakuza teach you so well how to keep a stone-face, how to build an armour around your real feelings. Again, Tanaka would have been proud! I had

been a good student - especially because I am white,
anglo-american-rooted.

But no! Tanaka was nothing but a fake! As was everything. EVERYTHING!

When I had taken in enough to chew on for the moment, I calmly asked to be let out, left alone to meditate & focus. I waited until they unplugged me and gave way.

++++ Trinity remembers: +++++

We all watched the screens while Morpheus was in the construct with Diamond, explaining her the nature of the Matrix. We were merely surprised of her reactions.

Neo: 'Wow! Ya ever seen someone bein' that cool?'

Me: 'No. She really deserves her name: this woman is darn tough. Wonder what will break her armour...'

Neo: 'Hopefully it will not scatter in a risky situation. We need her so urgently.'

Needles: 'I can't believe it. Bet old Morpheus is stunned, too!'

Tank: 'Holy shit!'

Me: 'What?'

Tank was staring at Diamonds bio-monitors:

'She's not half as cool. Watch her heart rate and blood pressure. Needles: you better watch that closely. Hope she will not pop in coolness.'

Neo: 'Damn it! We should get her out before she collapses. Tank, you better get ready for unloading. Needles, you're in charge now. Tell us when to take her out!'

Needles observed the monitors but before the biodata went to critical values, Diamond asked to be unloaded. Needles unplugged her and we all stood there, stunned watching Diamond returning calmly into her quarters.

'I'm sorry to interrupt your meditation, but would anybody of you guys mind to get me off the hook?'

Morpheus! We were so absorbed by watching Diamond, we completely forgot that another guy was still waiting for a hand. Neo rushed over help him. Morpheus was just taking breath to speak, when we heard a loud scream. Morpheus and Neo fought their way through the mass of cables, Needles and me bumped into each other when we tried to run over to the quarters' area, so Tank was the first to reach Diamonds door.

++++ Diamond tells: +++++

I made it into the cabin, closed the door and then....

I felt it. I knew it: Deep hot anger gathered inside me, rising & growing until, with a loud scream I could not hold back, I felt the rage coming up, exploding in really good aimed, professional kicks against this thing they called a bed. I really went berserk as I haven't done for a long time. I completely lost my temper.

Next thing I remember were arms, strong like steel bars pressing my arms to my body (after I surely hit whoever it was several times), holding me until after a while, I calmed down.

'You OK? can set you free?', a voice asked. Took some time to realize it was Tank's.

Heavily panting, I just nodded.

Hesitantly he loosened his grip and finally stepped back.

'Leave me, please, I have an urgent need to focus.'

'Uh - sure...'

He went back to the door, where the others were gathering, observing. Before Tank finally locked the door, he looked at me and then raised a hand towards his face.

....

There was nothing to focus on.

I was empty.

Everything was gone. 19 years of emotions, actions, relationships (although most of them not really worth a cent), all you define your existence, yourself by: shattered and the pieces vanished into haze.

I was a nobody, a nothing.

A new-born baby must feel very similar: basic physical needs, being thrown into a cold, uncomfortable surrounding with no possibility to return.

With a slight difference: It was my desicion to come here *must have been crazy!* What I had learned was still in my brains! Looking at the chaos around me it was obvious that my knowledge of martial arts hadn't left me, my body seemed to be the same (well, in general it was). Zen hadn't left me either.

I knew it would take some time to adjust to this, to separate all the fakes from the real. And if rugged clothes and stale food would be all I had to pay for having a real life, I would gladly pay that price (although I somehow knew that the price would proof to be much higher)

Sitting there for countless hours finally I could concentrate on my Hara and felt my Ki slowly flooding back in. It filled me with new energy and a new feeling. Something I never had before: something you need in the reality to stay alive:

Fear.

(More to come...)

End
file.